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Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6904
INFO AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 2211

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2
TAGS: PFOR, TU, CY
SUBJECT: US-TURKISH RELATIONS

1. AT MFA SECGEN ELEKDAG'S REQUEST, I MET WITH HIM LATE AFTERNOON MARCH 25. EKREM GUVENDIREN (MFA DIRECTOR GREEK/ CYPRUS AFFAIRS) AND EMBASSY POLOFF ALAN FLANIGAN WERE ALSO PRESENT. ELEKDAG ASKED THAT NO NOTES BE TAKEN AND THAT I REGARD OUR MEETING AS A "NON-MEETING." HE WANTED TO SPEAK PERSONALLY AND I WAS TO UNDERSTAND THAT HE WAS NOT SPEAKING WITH THE AUTHORIZATION OF THE GOVERNMENT. WHAT HE REALLY WANTED TO DO, HE SAID, WAS INFORMALLY AND OFF THE RECORD TO SHARE HIS WORRIES WITH ME. HE THEN SAID THAT A STRONG EFFORT WAS BEING MADE WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT TO INSURE A CONSTRUCTIVE TURKISH STANCE IN THE FORTHCOMING VIENNA TALKS. BUT THE GOING WAS VERY HARD INDEED. THE MILITARY WERE HELPFUL; SO WERE THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE FOREIGN MINISTER. THE PRESIDENT, WHOSE OFFICIAL POWERS WERE LIMITED, WAS ALSO DOING WHAT HE COULD. IN FACT, HE SAID, THE PRESIDENT WAS "EXCEEDING HIS AUTHORITY" IN THIS EFFORT.

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2. NEVERTHELESS, ELEKDAG WENT ON, HE WAS VERY WORRIED THAT THE DESIRED RESULT WAS NOT REPEAT NOT GOING TO BE ACHIEVED. THE REASON, HE EXPLAINED, WAS THAT "ONE WING OF THE GOVERNMENT HAS PRESENTED INSURMAOUNTABLE DIFFICULTIES." (GUVENDIREN, ELABORATING ON THIS OBVIOUS REFERENCE TO THE ERBAKAN FACTION, INDICATED THAT IMPORTANT ELEMENTS AMONG THE TURK/CYPRIOTS WERE ALSO JOINED WITH THIS "WING".) THE ARGUMENT BEING MADE BY

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THESE GROUPS IS THAT THE US IS UNACCEPTABLY PRESSURING THE GOT AND LINKING THE CYPRUS QUESTION TO THE US/TURKISH SECURITY PARTNERSHIP --AN ARGUMENT WHICH HAS MUCH POLITICAL SEX APPEAL HERE. THE NEED, ELEKDAG SAID, WAS TO FIND A WAY TO STRENGTHEN PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR THE MODERATE ELEMENTS OF THE GOVERNMENT. OTHERWISE, SAID ELEKDAG, "THESE PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN A DIFFERENT WORLD" ARE GOING TO SUCCEED "IN CLOSING OUT OUR AMERICAN OPTION."

3. ELABORATING, ELEKDAG SAID THE NEED WAS TO FIND SOME WAY TO UNDERMINE THIS HARD-LINE GROUP, AND WHAT HE THEN WONDERED WAS IF I THOUGHT THERE WAS ANY POSSIBILITY THAT IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS, WASHINGTON COULD ANNOUNCE ITS ENDORSEMENT OF THE DCA.

4. I SAID THAT I DID NOT SEE HOW WASHINGTON COULD ANNOUNCE ONLY THIS FACET OF THE MULTIPLE DECISIONS THAT HAD BEEN CONVEYED EARLIER TO AMBASSADOR ESENBEL. ELEKDAG THEN ASKED IF THIS MEANT WE WOULD ALSO HAVE TO SAY AT THE SAME TIME THAT WE WERE NOT REPEAT NOT GOING TO PRESS THE CONGRESS FOR ACTION ON THE AGREEMENT AT THIS TIME. WHEN I CONFIRMED THAT I WAS CERTAIN THAT THIS WOULD BE THE CASE, ELEKDAG SAID THAT IN THAT EVENT SUCH AN ANNOUNCEMENT WILL SIMPLY STRENGTHEN THE HANDS OF THOSE WHO WERE EXPLAITING THE RESENTMENT HERE AGAINST "AMERICAN PRESSURE" AND THE OPEN LINKAGE.

5. I SAID THAT I COULD APPRECIATE THE DIFFICULTIES THAT HE AND OTHERS WERE HAVING, BUT IT SEEMED TO BE ESSENTIAL IN TURKEY'S OWN NATIONAL INTERESTS, THAT THESE BE SURMOUNTED.
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I WAS SURE THAT WASHINGTON WOULD WANT TO BE HELPFUL IF WE COULD THINK OF SOME WAY, OTHER THAN ITS BEING ASKED TO MAKE A TRUNCATED ANNOUNCEMENT OF OUR POLICY DECISIONS. OFF-HAND, HOWEVER, I COULD NOT SEE WHAT WE COULD DO IN THE NEXT FEWS DAYS THAT WOULD PARTICULARLY BE HELPFUL. AFTER FURTHER REFLECTION, ELEKDAG, RATHER GLOOMILY, AGREED.
AT THIS POINT, HE AGAIN EMPHASIZED THAT IF THE ADMINISTRATION HAD TO INCLUDE IN AN ANNOUNCEMENT THE FACT THAT WE ARE GOING TO HOLD OFF ACTION ON THE DCA, IT WOULD BE MUCH PREFERABLE NOT TO MAKE ANY ANNOUNCEMENT AT ALL.

6. I ASKED, IN CONNECTION WITH WHAT HE HAD BEEN SAYING, WHETHER HE WAS HAVING THE MOST DIFFICULTY DEVELOPING A PRESENTABLE CONSTITUTIONAL POSITION, OR IN ARRIVING AT AN ACCEPTABLE NEGOTIATING POSITION REGARDING TERRITORY. AT THE MOMENT, IT WAS THE LATTER, HE SAID. WE DO NOT REALLY BELIEVE, HE WENT ON, THAT MAKARIOS IS GOING TO COME UP WITH A REASONABLE TERRITORIAL PROPOSAL. BUT HE JUST MIGHT, AND IN THAT

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EVENT, ELEKDAG SAID, IT WOULD BE A REAL TRAGEDY
IF THE TURKS WERE NOT IN A POSITION TO RECIPROCATE
WITH A REASONABLE NEGOTIATING STANCE OF THEIR OWN.

7. COMMENT: I REPORT THIS BASICALLY AS A MOOD PIECE.
I CANNOT SAY, (AND THE MORE ELEKDAG THOUGHT ABOUT
IT, HE COULD NOT SAY) WHAT THE USG CAN DO
TO HELP AT THIS PARTICULAR MOMENT.

8. GOT OFFICIALS OBVIOUSLY CAN HAVE CERTAIN TACTICAL
OBJECTIVES WHEN THEY SPEAK WITH US ALONG THE FOREGOING LINES.
HOWEVER, I CONCLUDE THAT THIS WORRYING OUT LOUD
WITH US IS ALSO A GENUINE REFLECTION OF THE DIFFICULTIES
WHICH WE HAVE ALWAYS KNOWN A DIVIDED GOVERNMENT IN
A PRE-ELECTION PERIOD WOULD FACE IN ANY BONA FIDE
EFFORT TO COME UP WITH A RESPECTABLE CYPRUS
NEGOTIATING STANCE.
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